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INFO RUMTBK/AMCONSUL SONGKHLA 3617  
BT  
C O N F I D E N T I A L

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGKOK 06100

E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: SREF, VN, TH  
SUBJECT: REFUGEE PUSHOFFS: ECONOMIST  
ARTICLE/CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

REF: STATE 31366

1. BY SEPTEL WE HAVE REPORTED THE AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL SECRETARY GENERAL PRASONG ON THE SUBJECT OF THE RECENT REFUGEE PUSHOFF INCIDENTS THAT WERE THE SUBJECT OF THE ECONOMIST ARTICLE. THAT CABLE PROVIDES THE LATEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE ON THE RTG'S RESPONSE TO THESE INCIDENTS.  
2. WE BELIEVE THERE WOULD BE MERIT IN SEEKING A ONE WEEK DELAY IN THE SOLARZ HEARINGS SO THAT THEY WOULD BEGIN ON FEBRUARY 13 RATHER THAN FEBRUARY 6. PRASONG WILL BE SPENDING SEVERAL DAYS IN SOUTH THAILAND AND WILL NOT BE RETURNING TO BANGKOK UNTIL EARLY NEXT WEEK. HE HAS AGREED TO DISCUSS HIS FINDINGS WITH US AT THAT TIME. WHILE WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT THE ACCURACY OF THE INFORMATION THAT HAS REACHED US THUS FAR CONCERNING THE PUSHOFF INCIDENTS, PRASONG MADE A VALID POINT WHEN HE NOTED TO THE AMBASSADOR THAT THAI OFFICIALS ON THE SPOT HAD NOT YET HAD A CHANCE TO PRESENT THEIR SIDE OF THE CASE. THE THAI ARE SENSITIVE AT BEING PLACED IN THE DOCKET OF WORLD PUBLIC OPINION ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION COMING EXCLUSIVELY FROM REFUGEE SOURCES, WHOM THEY FEEL SOMETIMES EMBELLISH THEIR ACCOUNTS. WITHOUT DEFENDING THAT POINT OF VIEW, WE FEEL THAT THE SOLARZ HEARINGS COULD PRODUCE MORE CONSTRUCTIVE RESULTS IF BOTH WE AND THE RTG HAD AVAILABLE THE PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF PRASONG'S FACT-FINDING MISSION. IN ADDITION, IF THE HEARINGS WERE DELAYED, THIS COULD STRENGTHEN OUR HAND DURING DISCUSSIONS WITH PRASONG ON ANY FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS BY THE RTG.

DEAN  
END OF MESSAGE

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State Dept. review completed

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